



PRESS RELEASE

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**SEMINOLE SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND DEA ROUND UP
NUMEROUS DEFENDANTS ON DRUG CHARGES**

A four month investigation into street level drug sales in Seminole County culminated today as local and federal agents fanned out throughout Seminole County in the pre-dawn hours to arrest dozens of defendants wanted on both state and federal drug charges. Members of the Drug Enforcement Administrations (DEA) Mobile Enforcement Team (MET) along with detectives and officers of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office began working undercover in late May making purchases of "crack" cocaine, concentrating their efforts in Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Oviedo, Midway and Sanford. During the operation, several loosely knit crack cocaine trafficking organizations were identified and investigated. Sheriff Donald F. Eslinger thanked those involved in the operation for their assistance and stated: "This partnership with DEA, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the State Attorney's office will have a major impact on those who choose to pedal crack cocaine in our community. These dealers are looking at several years in either state or federal prison thanks to this team effort."

All of those arrested today on federal charges face up to 20 years in federal prison and several are facing a minimum of five years and a maximum of 40 years in federal prison.

The investigation is a joint effort by the Seminole County Sheriff's Office and the Mobile Enforcement Team from DEA. The Mobile Enforcement Team from DEA travels throughout the state assisting agencies who are trying to make an impact on street level drug sales. The federal cases will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Rick Jancha of the Orlando Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless proven guilty.